

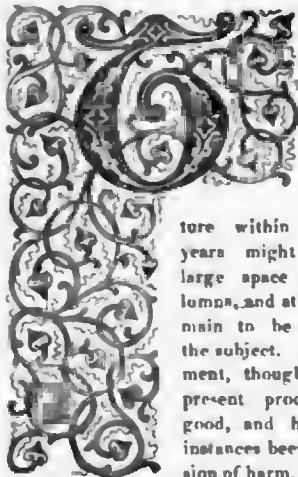
NOTICE.

THE Cyclopaedia of the Building-Act is now in type, and will be published in our next number, wherein, among other illustrations, it is our intention to give a drawing of the magnificent old carved Chimney-piece, taken from the ancient Hickes's Hall, St. John's-street, and now in the south-east committee-room of the Middlesex County Sessions' House.

The Builder.

NO. XL.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1844.



THE more-
m e n t
w h i c h
h a s t a k e n
p l a c e
w i t h r e g a r d
t o a r c h i t e c t u r e

within these few years might occupy a large space in our columns, and still much remain to be said upon the subject. This movement, though it has at present produced little good, and has in some instances been the occasion of harm, is no doubt

the forerunner of a regeneration of the true art and mystery of architecture. It has awakened public attention to the subject, and has enlisted in the cause many who are able as well as willing to assist judiciously, and to the purpose; and deducting the ordinary drawbacks from ill-advice and mere talkativeness, and making due allowance for the shackles and hindrances which they are sure to produce, it will be found that some sterling promise is opening to the cause, which must inevitably fulfil the wishes of the skilled and the sterling, who either devote their lives to the science, or admire and to their utmost foster it.

The various unprofessional societies which have lately sprung up, and which are devoted principally to ecclesiastical architecture, must in the end work a great deal of solid advantage, whether by awakening taste or arresting spoliation or demolition,—whether by improving new structures, or by restoring old buildings which would otherwise have gone to decay, or to violent destruction. It is true that much of the effect of these societies is lost by want of concert, and; as must be expected for some time to come, by a want of the scientific and technical attainments which relate to practical architecture. Some may say this at once incapacitates them from claim to touch any subject of architecture existing or to be formed: we cannot, however, go so far as that, for we are obliged to confess, that had the practising profession of architecture itself taken up the subject in earnestness, with a good heart, such societies would hardly have been necessary; but every one must admit that no party is indeed particularly to blame. The Reformation came as the natural consequences of the state of ecclesiastical matters at that juncture; had the fullness of time in that respect not come, the tyranny and cupidity of Henry the Eighth and the rapacity

of his courtiers would have been as powerless as the church then was to put off the humiliation which its sins had brought upon it; but the church being doomed to be humbled, the pride of its architecture was naturally humbled too. At that very critical time, the architecture of the ancient Romans was revived in Rome and other parts of Italy; and none were more active than the popes themselves in ousting the scientific Pointed Architecture, altering ancient Gothic edifices with a modern-antique masking, and setting the same example to all Europe,—notwithstanding Welby Pugin, who is as deficient in knowledge of history, secular and ecclesiastical, as in all the mechanical arts and sciences which were exercised by the Freemasons (even every joint of his carpentry being on false principles, and such as no competent carpenter ever practised),—would have one to believe ancient church architecture declined by the spread of Protestantism, carried on by that “Tyrant Elizabeth,” as he is pleased to call her, no doubt admiring the sweet-soled Mary, her sister, the legs of whose very bed, up to the sacking, if it had any, were steeped in the blood of episcopal martyrs (a thing little heard of even in pagan times), and whose proceeding may be taken as a model of that which men of his class would fain try the experiment of re-instituting: the popes having set the example, the ancient Roman architecture, under various phases of degeneracy, spread again from Venice to Ireland, and from the Mediterranean to the Baltic; and from the exact similarity of the curves in the Jacobine scrolls and filigree work with the moresco works of Spain, many of which indeed seem pricked off from the same moulds and templates, they thence appear to have been executed by the Moors, who were expelled from Spain by its Catholic sovereigns, for an doubt in the years 1609-10, when Philip the Third enforced his edict, and thrust not from the kingdom a million of souls, with the other Moors hosts of workmen, who, till then, had been based on their own arabesques, became from their skill the employed carvers and artificers wherever they could obtain toleration or encouragement,—showing, as far as any collateral testimony can, that Catholicism itself, in its zeal, caused a still further erratic movement from Christian architecture.

We wish all the legitimate power which could result from enthusiasm and activity, to be the crowning result of these societies; and that till they have obtained the requisite quantity of information and science they should be more pacific than active, confining themselves for the next five or six years principally to the acquirement of knowledge and the arresting of spoliation; so that in after-times they may have little cause for regret; and that in particular they should be very tender in the promulgation of dogmas, lest they inevitably lose repute for discretion, and be not esteemed of authority.

We caution them at present to doubt with themselves, till they find the truth; and especially to be careful, and even timid, in all matters of construction, not daring to utter opinions with regard to methods in carpentry and masonry which have obtained traditionally, practically, and scientifically; nor lightly to believe those who, in proportion to their want of practice, technical breeding, and abstruse study, esteem themselves entitled to reform, change, or restore. The most dangerous rock, upon which some of these societies are now falling, is the restoration of ancient things in new edifices, merely as examples of styles which once obtained, and because they had a certain descrip-

tion of taste (the best of the day) esteem them fit subjects for imitation; whereas nothing could, or at least should, be more notorious than the fact that improving science caused the freemasons to cease from particular methods, and to go on improving till architecture had attained a zenith; and that their master-masons would not have admitted, even into the rank of apprentices, those perverse enough not to follow the most advanced architectonic science, when the way had been pointed out by the genius of others.

We have not space at present for enlarging further upon so important a matter, but must defer doing so till another occasion.

m m n.

A SPECIAL meeting of the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture was held on Wednesday, October 30th, for the purpose of receiving the report of the committee appointed June 17.

There will also be meetings on Wednesday, November 13th, and Wednesday, November 27th. All these meetings will be held in the society's room, at eight o'clock in the evening.

DECORATIVE ART SOCIETY.

On Wednesday evening, the 30th of October, a paper was read by Mr. Fildes, “On Beds and Bedding.” After noticing the varieties in use among the ancients, and the sleeping arrangements of modern times, both in foreign countries and England, the paper concluded with an account of the materials that enter into the composition of the various articles of bedding, with remarks on the possibility of improving them, so as to increase the comfort of this indispensable article of furniture. In the discussion which ensued, various suggestions were thrown out for the consideration of manufacturers on practical improvements in the preparation of feathers, horse-hair, spiral springs for mattresses, &c.

On Wednesday, the 13th inst., a paper will be read “On Colour and Gilding,” in application to decorative purposes.

INTERCOURSE BETWEEN ENGLAND AND HAMBURG.

Mr. Elmes's project of constructing wet docks, with a spacious lock and much enlarged harbour, at Gluckstadt, on the Lower Elbe, and connecting it by the recently opened railways to the Baltic, and to Hamburg, via Altona, is not only one of the most important improvements in the intercourse between England and the countries adjacent to the Elbe and Baltic that have yet appeared, but will effect one of the greatest political and commercial revolutions of modern times. Gluckstadt is situated in one of the finest reaches of the Elbe, about 25 English miles from its mouth, with a clear channel of above a mile in width, and from 40 to 60 feet deep at high water, and from 30 to 40 feet deep at low water in front of the harbour, which is also protected by a natural breakwater, which is high and dry at every tide. In addition to the trading ships using this splendid new harbour, the steam-ships of London and Hull will make many more voyages a month than they now do to Hamburg, from the difficulty and danger of the navigation above Gluckstadt; and a new company, called the European Steam-Packet Company, is started for the purpose of effecting a daily communication from Harwich to Gluckstadt, which can be accomplished in 21 hours, and one hour by railroad to Hamburg will make 22 hours from Harwich to Hamburg; and when the branch railway from Colchester to Harwich is completed, 24 hours more from London will make 24 hours from London to Hamburg, which now takes from 50 to 70, and often in winter 80 hours.—Observer.